

1.22:887

U.S. DOCUMENTS COLLECTION
MONTANA STATE LIBRARY

Jun 1977

REPORT

OF THE

GOVERNOR OF MONTANA

TO THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

1887.

WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.
1887.

REPORT
OF THE
GOVERNOR OF MONTANA
TO THE
SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

1887.

WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.
1887.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
Montana State Library

REPORT

OF THE

GOVERNOR OF MONTANA.

THE TERRITORY OF MONTANA,
Governor's Office, Helena, October 3, 1887.

SIR : Under your request as per letter dated 11th August, it becomes my pleasant duty to report the general prosperity of this great and favored Territory over which it has pleased the President to give me the honor of presiding.

I cannot speak in too strong terms the praise of those hardy pioneers who left the ease and refinements of civilized life, who left friends and relatives, and with rifle, pick, and shovel sought their fortunes in the golden sands of our gulches ; or of those who left their homes, schools, and churches, and loaded the most cherished of their household goods into wagons, and with a few domestic animals and agricultural implements, and with their wives and little ones, took their long, weary way thousands of miles over wild prairies, across broad rivers, over mountains and through deep, dark gorges, always surrounded by bands of prowling, thieving, and bloodthirsty savages, and after months of such march, beset with more dangers and hardships than beset the army of Xenophon, and that often baffled the hardy soldiers of Lewis and Clarke, they planted their homes in these beautiful valleys and here laid broad and deep the foundations of a great and prosperous commonwealth.

These brave men and *braver* women came with empty pockets, but with clear heads, strong hands, and honest hearts ; they have compelled these gulches to give up their shining dust, and these mountains to yield their golden treasures ; they have turned these mountain streams upon a thirsty soil and secured the most luxuriant crops. The gold, and the glowing descriptions of hidden treasures of mines and soils, and genial skies, which they sent home brought thousands to their assistance ; and in a quarter of a century they have built a prosperous commonwealth on the foundations so well laid by those free, hardy pioneers.

Cities have sprung up like magic ; large, stately structures have been erected for public uses ; substantial and commodious school houses and other institutions of learning, good church buildings, commercial and banking houses that would be no discredit to Broadway and Wall street, mark the progress of this great country.

Men who wielded the pick and shovel or drove a bull team for long years now live in palaces, dictate financial policies, regulate discounts, and direct the channels of commerce. Thousands of prosperous rural

homes, such as are found nowhere but upon the American farm, ornament all our broad, rich valleys, and the hum and tread of busy industry add music to the hills, while millions of cattle and horses and sheep feed and fatten on the grasses which grow spontaneous everywhere all over this broad domain.

The man who came here with his family, cow, a pair of horses, or a yoke of oxen is now a "cattle king," who can count the thousands which bear his brand on the prairies.

Just a few years ago a small number of freight lines and two or three steamers did all the carrying trade, but now numerous freight lines and stage lines, fleets of steamboats, and thousands of miles of railroads are busy and noisy with the Rocky Mountain commerce.

Such, in general terms, was the beginning, and such has been the progress and growth, of Montana.

POPULATION.

Montana has a population wonderfully homogeneous and law-abiding, when it is known that it has been gathered from the four quarters of the world and that nearly every race and people upon the face of the earth has contributed its quota to make up the body politic of this Commonwealth.

Men from China and from India, from Africa and Australia, from all Europe, South America, and Mexico, and all the provinces of Canada have come to unite their fortunes with ours in populating this Territory of attractions. They all associate in business, travel in the same conveyance, go to the same schools, vote at the same polls, and obey the same laws. But we have no reliable means of determining just how many people live in this Territory. From the best information that could be obtained last year the number was set down at 120,000. There has been probably an increase of 10,000 during the present year, making the present population about 130,000.

AGRICULTURE.

The most conservative industry, and that one best calculated of all to yield the necessities and comforts of life and the most certain to produce a hardy, virtuous, and patriotic people, is agriculture.

It is not, then, an unmixed evil that the great loss of stock during the last severe winter has turned the attention of our people more fully to ordinary farming. The conviction is becoming very strong that it is not safe to trust cattle on the range without some provision for their support when the grass is short and the weather is so excessively severe, for when these conditions arrive it is too late to obtain the needed food. There are no neighboring communities whose surplus could be obtained, and in fact the surplus of no State would have been sufficient to save the many thousands which perished of starvation last winter. And, besides, there is a grave question of humanity involved in this business.

Such sufferings, even of the dumb brute, make an irresistible appeal to every human heart. These facts have led our people to make more liberal provisions for the production of forage; larger quantities of hay and grain have been cut and stored for the coming winter. Farms suitable for the production of hay and grain are in greater demand; large areas have been fenced in and numerous ditches and canals have been constructed and others projected, which will greatly extend the area of cultivated and yielding land.

The present season has been most favorable for the production of all our staple crops. There has been full sufficient rain to produce fair crops of oats, barley, wheat, Indian corn, potatoes, peas, and garden products without irrigation.

The yields without irrigation are up to 80 bushels for oats, 65 for wheat, 40 for corn, and 200 to 300 bushels per acre for potatoes; and there has been this year a very abundant crop of the small fruits. The increased rainfall and the new canals, with the loss of range stock last winter, have given a new impulse to regular farming in Montana.

STOCK-RAISING.

Prior to the present year this important industry was in a most prosperous condition in Montana, but the last terrible winter was most disastrous. The shortness of the grass crop, consequent upon the drought of the preceding summer, combined with the deep snow and excessive cold of the winter, destroyed range cattle in numbers amounting to very many thousands. Horses suffered much less than cattle, as they have a better organization for digging in the snow, and sheep still less than horses, for most of them had feed and shelter. The lessons taught by the losses of the year have turned the attention of stockmen more generally to the production of grasses and other forage plants. More hay has been put up the present season than ever before.

The following is the estimated number of domestic animals, furnished to me by the assessors of the several counties of the Territory and other reliable sources, for this present year, to wit:

Cattle	1,400,000
Horses.....	190,000
Sheep	2,000,000

The grade of cattle, horses, and sheep in this Territory is of a high order, and every farmer, ranchman, and stock-grower is striving to improve and gather a still better class of stock. The wool gathered this year from the sheep in this Territory has principally been shipped and sold, and must have produced over \$1,000,000, while the income from the sale of horses and beef cattle has been large and full of remuneration.

The total assessed value of the taxable property for the present year in this Territory is \$60,200,000.

MINING.

Of all the industrial pursuits, mining continues to be the leading occupation of this people. From the first settlement to the present time mining has been the great interest of Montana; and the progress of this industry has been constant and rapid, through all the business and commercial vicissitudes to the present time.

Notwithstanding the low price of silver, copper, and lead, more capital has been invested and more mines developed in this than any previous year of our history, and those engaged in this industry were never more prosperous and hopeful than now. It is difficult to obtain accurate statements of the yield of our mines, as so much of their products find their way to eastern markets, through the many public and private channels, but it will be safe to state the value of the gold, silver, copper, and lead produced from the mines of Montana during the present year at \$26,000,000. For many years the efforts of Montana's miners were directed almost exclusively to the working of the gold and silver contained in our mines.

But additional facilities of transportation have enabled these enterprising men to work the extensive mines of copper and lead which are combined with the more valuable precious metals, principally silver.

The depreciation of silver, however, has greatly crippled this, by far the most important and extensive and valuable portion of our mines. Montana has but few mines which could be profitably worked save for the value of the silver which their ores contain. This is not only true of Montana, but of all the mining Territories.

The Territories are the wards of the Government, and as such we must look to our guardian to protect and foster the industrial interests upon which our very existence depends and on which our prosperity rests. While our people freely pay large, and in some instances exorbitant, taxes for the support of long-established and richly-endowed industries of the old and wealthy portions of our country, we ask no protection for this great industry developed by our own enterprise and labor, though equal justice could but grant it; we, who by and through our unprotected labor are yearly pouring millions into all the treasuries and channels of commerce of this great country, simply ask that the silver we produce shall share its full measure of just consideration in the legislation of the Government. Since the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad mineral coal has become an important element in our mining industry. Extensive beds near the line of that road have been successfully worked and the coal utilized for domestic manufacturing and mining purposes.

* The scarcity and high price of wood in many parts of the Territory have induced the expenditure of much labor in the development of the numerous deposits of this class of fuel.

It is now known that there workable beds of good bituminous coal and lignite, underlying large areas, and in nearly every county in the Territory.

FORESTS AND LUMBER.

The forests of Montana are certainly on the decrease.

The large amount of lumber used for fence building, for operating mines, for railroad building, and for fuel has made vast inroads upon Montana's limited forests. Forest fires, too, have annually overrun large areas in our mountains, killing and destroying the timber. At the present rate of consumption and destruction our forests will soon disappear, entailing upon the occupants of this country the same disastrous results which have ever followed the destruction of forests. There has been since the settlement of this Territory an obvious increase in the amount of rain and snow, caused doubtless in part by irrigation and the growth of farm crops, and in part, perhaps, by the construction of railroad and telegraph lines; but we may expect that the destruction of our mountain forests will diminish the rain and snow, so as to lessen the present scant supply of water for mining, farming, and navigation. While these forests are owned by the Government, under present laws and regulations it may be difficult to provide a remedy. No one feels it to be his duty to protect such public property, and all claim a right to cut so much of it as he needs for his own use, *and what he can sell to his fellow-citizens*. But if these forest lands were surveyed and sold to the citizens under proper regulations, the individual owners would have a strong personal motive to secure such legislation and give such supervision as would prevent the wanton waste of lumber, and the careless and criminal destruction of the forests by fires; or if the proposed park on the main range of the Rocky Mount-

ains in the northern part of the Territory was established and protected by the military or other competent authority, that part of the natural beauty and wealth of this growing Territory might be preserved. Under the present system, the destruction of these valuable forests is inevitable, and that in the near future; and the importance of their preservation is so great that I feel impelled to ask a serious consideration of this matter, and for such action in wisdom as will save this great interest from ruin and destruction.

COMMERCE.

In the early days of Montana the commerce of the Territory was carried on by steamboats, freight trains, pack trains, and stage lines. But the advent of railroads has changed the modes of transportation. The railroads have taken place of the stage lines and freight trains, but the steamboat still holds its place on our navigable rivers; stages and freight trains, routed from their former lines of travel, have retired to other more restricted and local lines of business and domestic commerce.

THE RAILROADS

have done much for Montana in securing for her people and their friends easy and comfortable traveling facilities, and rapid transportation for commercial objects.

The Utah and Northern first connected us with the Union Pacific east and the Central Pacific west; then the Northern Pacific gave us more direct communications east and west.

During the present year the Saint Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railroad has entered this Territory and built upon its soil, to that most wonderful and beautiful city, Great Falls, on the Missouri river, a distance of 464 miles of railroad; and the Montana Central has built and will complete within a few weeks its road from Great Falls to Helena, the capital of this Territory, 102 miles, thus furnishing a continuing unbroken line of railroad from the capital of Montana, by way of Great Falls, Benton, Fort Buford, Devil's Lake and to Saint Paul, a distance of over 1,150 miles; and this Montana Central has under contract a continuation of its line of road from Helena to Butte City, about 80 miles, and will be finished in the early months of 1888. The Northern Pacific stretches from Saint Paul, on the Mississippi river, through this Territory, by way of Helena, to the Pacific waters on Puget Sound.

These three great lines of roads, the Utah and Northern, the Northern Pacific, and the Manitoba and Montana Central, with their numerous branches, are and will be mighty agencies in aid of further developing these mountains so richly stored with valuable treasures. The whole number of miles of new railroad built and put in operation this year within this Territory is 626.

EDUCATION.

Montana is justly proud of her public and private schools. Liberal provision is made by direct taxation for the support of public schools and good buildings have been erected for these people's colleges in all the populated portions of the Territory. Our cities and towns have substantial, commodious, and even elegant school buildings, and the most approved systems of graded schools, kept up for the larger part of the year. In fact, these schools will compare favorable with the

schools in towns of equal size in any of the States. These public schools are supported by direct county and district taxes, and penal fines for violation of Territorial laws.

The county taxes can not be less than three mills nor more than five mills per dollar, on the valuation of all taxable property. Districts may vote additional taxes for building, apparatus, and salaries of teachers.

The amount of school money raised by direct taxation during the last year was \$223,871, and from fines in various courts \$6,466, making for public schools \$230,337.

SCHOOL LANDS.

Montana has been the home of the white man only a fraction over a quarter of a century; her people have no school fund except as they draft upon their estates by the process of taxation. The General Government has heretofore donated to our people for school purposes lands which consist of the 16 and 36 sections of each township and 72 sections for the support of a State university. But these lands are still held by the giver, and Montana has no title to or control over them. They have been selected and designated, so that the school mark is upon them. It therefore appears to be appropriate for me to ask your attention to this most sacred trust, involving the intelligence and virtue of the future population of this promising commonwealth.

I am advised, and believe the information to be true, that very much of these lands has been seized by certain persons, who have them fenced up and live upon them, and in this and other ways are appropriating and consuming their products, greatly to the injury and tending much to the destruction of this valuable school property; and I am assured that this species of taking for private uses of the wrongdoer has been going on for a number of years.

Moreover it is a fact that already some portions of these school lands have been lost, in this, that a portion of them were found to have been appropriated before they were surveyed and designated for school or university purposes. And still another portion was taken as mineral lands.

I ask for the people of Montana that such action be taken as will insure the *immediate expulsion* from these lands of every person who is engaged in their occupancy, cultivation, or selfish appropriation in any way, and that ample provision be made for their oversight and protection against trespass and spoliation.

THE MILITIA.

Twenty years ago a general Indian outbreak was threatened in the Territory, to prepare for which there was issued by the governor, for the use of the militia, arms and ammunition to the value of \$67,561.50, and the Territory thereby became indebted to the general Government in that sum for said arms, etc. These military stores were issued by the ordnance office from the large accumulation then in the possession of the Government as one of the results of the civil war, and were of a pattern not then used by the Regular Army, consisting chiefly in muzzle-loading muskets, and cartridges and equipments therefor. A large quantity of these stores are now in the Territorial arsenal, and while generally in good condition, they are so obsolete and valueless that they will not bear the cost of transportation to market, even if a market could be found for them. Since they were issued and charged to the

Territory, the yearly appropriation made to the Territory to arm and equip the militia, amounting annually to something less than \$1,400, was credited by the ordnance officer to the account of such indebtedness, whereby it was reduced on the books of that office in February, 1887, at the end of twenty years, to \$35,436, and which balance was under authority of the act of Congress approved February 17, 1887, credited to the Territory, and the account closed. In 1885 the legislature of Montana made provision for the organization of the National Guard, and appropriated funds from the Territorial treasury to defray the necessary expense of armories and annual encampments for instruction of the organized militia, and provided for the transportation of the troops to and from the same and for their subsistence thereat. There are now in the Territory 1 regiment of infantry, comprising 7 companies, and 2 companies of cavalry, "regularly enlisted, organized, and uniformed active militia," embracing, with the general staff, 473 officers and men, as shown by the report of the current year of the adjutant-general of Montana to the Secretary of War.

These men have been armed and equipped with the obsolete material referred to, which they use with great reluctance under a sense of feeling that they deserve better. And while a commendable military ardor pervades the organization, it can not be maintained under such conditions. Annual encampments are not practicable, for the total want of tents and camp equipage. It is highly desirable to have a limited number of efficient militia in Montana to aid the civil authorities in cases of emergency, which are likely at any time to occur. I therefore earnestly recommend, in view of such necessity and of the fact that the Territory has not actually received any appropriation for the past 20 years to arm and equip its militia other than less than 250 rifles for infantry and a small quantity of metallic cartridges therefor, issued during the year ensuing July 1, 1887, that Congress direct the Secretary of War to issue to the governor forthwith, under the provisions of the act of February, 1887, arms, ordnance stores, quartermaster's stores, and camp equipage sufficient to fully arm and equip 473 officers and men, staff, infantry, and cavalry, less the rifles above mentioned.

LABOR SUPPLY.

The rapid progress and spirited enterprise which have so much given notice to this Territory could only be accomplished by hard and faithful labor; wages are good, and no scarcity of men ready and willing to brave every hardship has at any time occurred. The working men and women of Montana are contented, prosperous, and happily pursuing their way in good citizenship.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

The Territory of Montana has no public buildings. Each county has its court-house and county jail, and a home for the poor within its borders. Some of these court-houses are elegant and commodiously arranged, and advertise well the taste and liberality of the people.

The United States has built and now owns and controls a penitentiary within this Territory, and in that institution are confined the Territorial prisoners, for whose keeping and provision the General Government is paid by the Territory. The penitentiary is in the main a safe and secure prison-house, and is well officered and kept, but there should

be stone walls around the buildings, so as to more certainly prevent escapes; as it is, the wooden inclosure is no protection or obstacle in the way of an escaping prisoner.

The United States assay offices at Helena are within a large and well-appointed building. The usefulness of this institution can be materially enhanced by the establishment of a refinery in connection with its present use. The same conditions do not prevail in Montana which exist in Colorado, as there are no private refineries here to compete with. This competition is the main objection to the continuance of the refinery at the San Francisco mint. The output of the precious metals in the country adjacent and tributary to Helena amounts to more than thirty millions per annum. The regulations governing the mint service preclude the purchase at the assay-offices (except the one in New York) of bullion having a fineness of less than five hundred one thousandths in gold. Many of the properties in this locality produce bullion which, although rich in gold, does not reach this standard.

The necessary acid and metallic copper produced at reduction works in the vicinity of Helena can be purchased at very reasonable rates, and the "bluestone" resulting from the process as a by-product finds a ready market here. The refinery is in all cases self-sustaining, and in view of the necessities of the case, and in justice to those enterprising producers of so much wealth to the country, I recommend that a small appropriation be made, a sufficient sum to improve and add to these assay buildings the necessary preparations, and that a refinery be established and located at this place.

The gold can be purchased by the Government as at present, and silver returned to depositors in fine bars for shipment to the markets of the world.

The Territory of Montana has no asylum for the insane and lunatic, or institutions of learning for the blind, the deaf and dumb, or the feeble-minded, or other eleemosynary institutions; but the legislation of her people has made ample and liberal provisions for the comfort, care, and treatment of all these classes of affliction upon the people, and the citizenship of this Territory, without complaint, are cheerfully paying heavy taxes for that noble end.

INDIANS.

The government and control of the Indians has been for all the year past successfully administered, greatly favoring the peace and safety of our citizens and their property, except the occasional raids of the Pie-gans upon the Crows to steal horses, and then a like retaliatory raid by a squad of Crows. In the travel of these parties, hostile to each other, it often happens that the white man's property is stolen and the peace and quiet of the country greatly disturbed.

The Bloods and Blackfeet, too, often prowl about away from their reservations, and great numbers of the horses and cattle of our citizens are stolen and hurried off, sometimes carried across the line into the British dominions. These outrages and depredations upon the striving, peaceable citizenship of the Territory tend naturally to arouse the spirit of resentment, and invite a contest, prompted by a feeling of self preservation, which will certainly come in a belligerent form in the early future, if not averted by prompt and firm measures set in motion to prevent the recurrence of these pillaging expeditions. I most earnestly ask for these good citizens of Montana that attention be given to this, the subject of their great annoyance and sufferings.

GENERAL REMARKS.

I make specific mention of the fact that Montana's interests have been greatly cramped and her progress much retarded on account of the alien land law passed by the Congress of the United States. That law, so far as it has or will prevent aliens from grasping and holding great and extensive areas of land, may be very well, and to that extent is unobjectionable; but the provisions of that law under which foreign capital is kept from investment and from the development of these great mountains of gold, silver, and other precious metals is a great weight and hindrance to our people who are so zealously engaged in uncovering and presenting to the people these millions of hidden treasures. The mining interests in these extensively far-reaching hills and mountains are yet in their infancy, and great wonders of wealth will yet flow out from them to the world.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

PRESTON H. LESLIE,
Governor.

Hon. L. Q. C. LAMAR,
Secretary of the Interior.

○

